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REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE  
HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC ON EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRESS IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 1956-1957.

Introduction

The 1956-57 school year began under very favourable circumstances. According to the first-year appropriations of the Second Five-Year Plan the schools were to get a considerable number of additional rooms and much additional equipment. In the first four grades of the eight-grade primary schools teaching began according to new modern schedules and curricula. The new schedules and curricula for grades five through eight were to be tried out in experimental schools. In a good portion of the schools significant steps were taken in the way of introducing workshop classes in order to reach vocational skills /polytechnical instruction/.

The counter-revolutionary events in October had an adverse effect on the school year which had started under so good auspices. In the smaller towns and villages there was hardly any let-up in instruction, but in Budapest and the larger provincial towns classes had to be suspended for several weeks because of transportation troubles and fuel shortage. A number of school buildings and considerable school equipment suffered damage, first of all in Budapest. After the resumption of classes discipline seemed to grow laxer in some of the schools.

The second half of the school year had to be spent with reconstruction and repair. The last months of the school year passed undisturbed. Since the teachers did their work with a special sense of responsibility, a small prolongation of the school year was enough to enable pupils to complete the essential subject matter of the school year and go on to the next grade unchecked.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of People's Culture have merged. The resulting Ministry of Culture deals with the instruction and cultural education of young people and the adult population.

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I. School Administrationa/ School inspection

The system of inspection did not undergo any change in course of the year. General and specialized inspectors supervise the schools. Of the general inspectors, the secondary-school inspectors are employed by the County, and the primary-school/compulsory eight-grade comprehensive school/ inspectors are employed by the Borough Department of Education. The specialized instructors spend half time as school teachers, whereas the other half of their job is the supervision of the teaching of specialized subjects at the schools. The inspection of specialized secondary school is dealt with contrally by the Ministry of Culture or by other Ministries maintaining specialized secondary schools.

In this extraordinary school: year the inspectors did a greath deal to help in the resumption of classes after the involuntary suspension and in ensuring conditions conducive to unhampered instruction. Where this was necessary, they helped to abridge the material to be taught, etc.

b/ Budgetary appropriations

The budgetary appropriations for 1957 are 13 per cent higher than were for 1956. Due to the damages caused by the counter-revolution, however, this increase stipulates only for the larger number of pupils- without providing this year for the qualitative improvement planned earlier.

II. School Organization

a/ At the kindergarten institutions the principal task remains the gradual satisfaction of the demands of society, thus the extension of the nursery-school network and a continued rise in the number of kindergarten teachers.

Because of the counter-revolutionary events the statistical survey usually made in December had to be omitted, and therefore we are not able to give data for 1956.

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In the primary schools 1,255,001 pupils were enrolled /in 1955: 1,226,000/. The number of primary-school divisions increased from 38,404 in 1955 to 39,397 in 1956. From 50,250 in 1955, the number of teachers went up to 52,210, and thus the number of pupils per teacher fell from 24.4 to 24.1.

In the secondary schools the enrolment figure rose from 11,106 in 1955 to 125,501. This increase was caused by the larger number of students admitted to the first forms of the general gymnasias /academic secondary schools/. The total student body of the gymnasias went up from 68,000 to 77,400. In the specialized /vocational/ secondary schools the falling trend, first indicated last year, is still continuing, for in the past few years over-size student bodies were admitted to some specialized secondary schools, which thus trained more graduates than the national economy demanded.

At the universities and colleges the number of students fell from 30,665 in 1955 to 28,885. The decrease was due to the causes mentioned in the previous year - first of all by the wish to improve the standard of instruction.

Adult education - Approximately 35,000 students were enrolled in the evening and correspondence courses of the primary schools. Forty thousand were enrolled in the evening sessions and correspondence divisions of the secondary schools. Thirteen thousand people were taking advantage of the evening and correspondence schools at the university level.

#### b/ Universities and colleges.

Beginning with the 1957-58 school year the universities of arts and sciences and the technical universities are increasing the time of a full course from the present four years to five, in order to ensure higher-level training and more thorough instruction.

School teachers specializing in the teaching of foreign languages were trained until now only at the Lőr  nd B  tv  s University of Arts and Sciences in Budapest. Now departments of

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classical philology, German and Romance languages are being organized at the provincial universities as well.

During the school year a decision was made on taking teachers training out of the secondary schools and training elementary-school /first four grades of the primary school/ teachers at two-year colleges following secondary-school matriculation. This measure is expected to improve considerably the general culture and professional qualifications of future teachers and kindergarten personnel.

### III. Curricula, Textbooks and Methods

#### Primary school

In grades one through four of the eight-grade primary school instruction was based on new schedules, curricula and textbooks. Both teachers and parents are very pleased with the new books, ~~the~~ and curricula. Children prefer the new books. The material is more systematically arranged in them than before, they prepare better for school work in the higher grades, and at the same time, being more interesting and livelier, they are closer to children's mentality.

In the course of the school year the curricula and textbooks for the higher grades of the primary school were experimentally tried out. Though the interrupted school year could not provide fully reliable results, the new curricula and textbooks can probably be introduced by autumn, 1958. A large number of practicing teachers have been invited to participate in the elaboration of the new curricula.

In the compulsory eight-grade primary schools compulsory instruction is possible in one foreign language only. Because of the geographical location, social system and accordingly the availability of specialized teachers, this language is Russian. One of the modern western languages was offered as an optional subject in the higher four grades, but until now parents had to pay for the cost of such instruction. Beginning with autumn, 1957 the study of optional languages will be made free, to enable more pupils to study them. At the same time, practicing teachers will be given the opportunity through corres-

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pendence courses to qualify for the teaching of one of the optional modern foreign languages offered in primary schools.

#### Gymnasia /secondary schools/

The introduction of elements of polytechnic instruction was a central objective in the school year. Laboratory classes to supplement theoretical studies were instituted in physics, chemistry and biology. To provide successful guidance in these classes, teachers were supplied with laboratory manuals. In a few gymnasia experimentally two class hours of different kinds of shopwork were introduced.

During the school year several measures which have become necessary were elaborated to be introduced in the 1957-58 school year. Both in the arts and in the science divisions of the gymnasia, the study of two foreign languages will be required. The history of art will be made a separate subject. In one-third of the total number of the gymnasia the teaching of logic and of psychology will be introduced as an experiment.

The academic standards of the gymnasia may be measured every year also by the results of the nationally held inter-school competitive examinations. This year the competitive examinations were offered in mathematics alone. Over 3,000 students participated and 300 made the finals. The problems were more difficult than those given last year. Several students produced outstanding achievements.

#### Technical /vocational/ secondary schools

The industrial and agricultural secondary schools - to which students are admitted upon completion of the eight-grade primary school - train technicians and lower-grade leaders for agricultural posts. During the last school year extensive debates were launched on the proper relationship of the training of medium-grade experts in the secondary schools to the training of skilled workers, and to professional training in the colleges and universities. It is still a matter of dispute whether it would not be better to base the training of middle-grade specialists /technicians/ on graduation from the gymna-

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sium. The trend of the discussion indicates the broad outlines of a reform which is soon to be elaborated for technical schools.

Consequently no basic changes were effected in the schedules and curricula for the last school year. Slight changes were made in a few subjects where technical advance made this imperative. Several smaller changes were made to reduce oversize curricula and to lift some of the extra burden on students.

### Universities

The raising of the duration of a full course at the universities and colleges from four to five years necessitated the elaboration of new curricula. At the universities of arts and sciences the curricula for future teachers enable students to get a better background in educational theory and method, to do a considerable amount of practical work in education and to attend several special seminars. At the technical universities the new curricula make possible a more thorough grounding and enable future graduates to keep more closely abreast with the rapid advances in technic.

Work was going on throughout the year on draft schedules and curricula for the teachers' and kindergartenteachers' colleges, which will open in autumn, 1959. These colleges must have curricula which - building on the general culture acquired in the gymnasium - give a thorough grounding in education and psychology, prepare for the teaching of the special elementary-school subjects /singing, drawing, and physical training/, and provide training in the methodology of teaching grades one through four, leaving time for plenty of practice teaching.

### IV. Teaching Personnel

In the second half of the 1956-57 school year the effort to improve the financial status of teachers was continued. After the 22 per cent raise, which became effective on September 1, 1955, one and a half year later, beginning with

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April 1, the salary of teachers was increased by an additional 16 per cent on the average. Within this scheme of adjustment, the salaries of more highly qualified teachers /with university degrees/ were more sharply raised. Similarly, larger than average increases were granted to teachers working with problem children not amenable to regular class instruction, and to teachers whose jobs call for more time than usual /teachers for backward children and educator-counsellors at children's homes/.

Promotions from one pay-category to the next are now made faster, the former four- or five-year intervals having been cut chiefly to three and in a smaller percentage to four years. In this way faster promotion has been ensured.

Parallel with the increases granted to teachers, considerable raises were given to other, non-teaching, school employees as well.

#### V. Extra-Curricular Services - Special Education of Backward Children.

In 1956-57 six new institutions of special education were established, providing room for 900 children, partly mental defectives and partly deaf-and-dumb children. The number of special classes and speech-correction courses operating in primary schools was also increased. In the larger towns "Educational Centers" were set up. Here a staff consisting of a physician, a psychologist, a pedagogue and a specialist in the treatment of backward children examine children and advise parents coming to them with serious educational and behaviour problems.

A new curriculum for mental defectives has been drawn up and is now under discussion.

Every year a number of important manuals are published for teachers of backward children. "The Role of Sign Language in the Life of the Deaf and Hearing" is one of the publications issued this year.



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Child protection

Seven new children's homes were established in 1956-57. Plans are being drawn up for the setting up of a modern "Children's Town". Several books on child protection were published, for instance: "Collective Education in Children's Institutions", "Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency", etc.

Youth movement

During the counter-revolution heavy attacks were directed at the Pioneer Movement active in the primary schools. But the children as well as the teachers and parents came to the rescue of the movement, for they had come to like it during the last ten years.

The rejuvenated pioneer movement has made efforts to get rid of earlier defects. In its methods it is paying greater attention to the psychological requirements of the different age groups and stresses more romantic and playful activities. Care is taken to differentiate activity within the youth movement from school activity, for instance, more time is now devoted to excursions, camping, etc. and more emphasis is laid on the acquisition of different skills at a level really commensurate with the age of the pioneer /badges for passing different tests, etc./.

The Union of Working Youth /DISZ - after the Hungarian initials/ was active in the secondary schools at the beginning of the school year. Early in the school year there were already heated debates among teachers and youth leaders on how to improve the work of this youth organization. What demands should be set before young people of from 14 to 18 in the youth organization? How is the activity of the youth organization to be made as rich and attractive as possible? - these were some of the questions raised. These discussions were interrupted by the events of October-November. In the second half of the school year, the reorganized youth movement marshalled its ranks under the name of Communist Youth League /KISZ - after its Hungarian initials/. Members par-

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ticipate in the activity of the League on a voluntary basis. The organization is active in the political, cultural and sport fields, emphasizing the patriotic education of young people and the teaching of respect and affection for other peoples. A large number of young people who are not members of the organization participate in such activities of the League as tours and trips to various parts of the country, cultural programmes, etc.

A wide range of summer activities /tours, camping, exchange with foreign students, etc./ is going to be arranged by the organization.